

PERVERSE SINCE 1911

NOV. 11, 1996

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1996

A collage featuring a black and white photograph of a couple kissing. Overlaid on the image are several strips of text from a newspaper, including "Daily bisexual gay dyke trans", "Queer ze hate", "Daily", "boytoy colour", "Queer pussy power II", and "fagb e merrit".

A black and white collage of various images related to the LGBTQ+ community. The collage is set against a background of diagonal stripes. The images include: a drag queen in a white outfit; a couple in military uniforms; a person in a corset; a person in a hat; and a person in a dark outfit. The collage is a mix of different styles and subjects, representing the diversity of the community.

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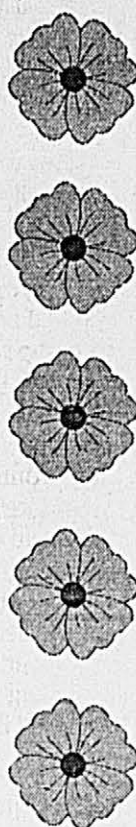
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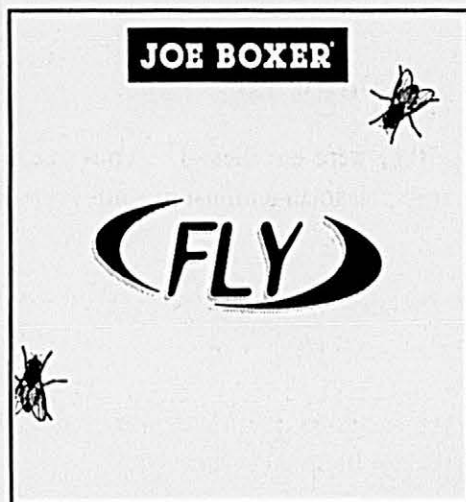
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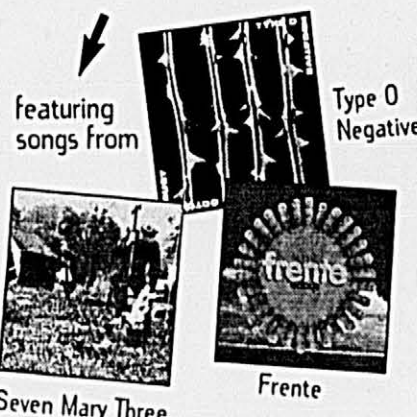


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COMMENT

Several weeks ago, a McGill student came into the Daily to voice his discontent. As you will probably guess, this is not an uncommon occurrence. His particular complaint concerned the amount of queer content in the *Daily*. According to him, there is clearly too much. He continued by asking if we knew how 'homosexuals' led their lives.

This issue is *in part* the answer. We are people who live lives of resistance - consciously or not. We are people who challenge and question the status quo. And we are much more diverse than 'homosexuals'. We are dykes, fags, trannies, bi-dykes, cocksuckers, fairies, genderfuckers, bend-ers and outlaws, femmes, butches, queens, kings, and queers.

It is because we live in opposition to the very foundations of society that we provoke so much fear. It is because we cause people to question themselves and the world in which they live that we incite so much hate.

Our actions and the changes we seek are rooted in the love, affection, and desire that are integral to our lives

This issue of the *Daily* strives to illustrate our diversity, our passions, our adversities, and our strengths.

In addition, the existence of this issue is imperative in that it inhabits a space where there was once nothing but silence.

For so long, those who have strayed beyond the confines of heterosexuality have been denied both a voice and the freedom to exist. Therefore, this is a celebration. However, there are still many who are voiceless. This issue is part of the process of ensuring that these voices are heard.

Inside you will find articles and images that only begin to address some of the concerns and experiences of those who are Transgender, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Queer. Many of us have reclaimed this term to illustrate our pride in what is considered by some to be 'perverse'.

'Attacked on all fronts' is an article outlining the problems that bisexuals face from both the queer and straight communities. The word queer is supposed to be inclusive, but many people, queer or straight, have not begun to accept or respect sexual diversity.

Including transgenders in our understanding of sexuality and gender is a battle that has only just begun. The review of Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* investigates transgender issues and the societal underpinnings of their

historical erasure. This is one step which seeks to carve out a place for a community that has had little recognition and to re-define what a person can be.

How we reconcile our religious, cultural, and sexual identities is a question that is raised in "Resident Alien." "Queers of colour" begins to tell the story of racism within the Queer community.

'Political' is a term that can be used to describe everything in this issue, from coming out to your parents and friends, to responding to homophobic graffiti on bathroom walls, to writing letters to the government, and to attending a kiss-in. Reading this issue is political in itself.

The Queer Issue is in part a response to the aforementioned complainer who asked how we live our lives. It is a testament to them. It is also a testament to our contributions to the lives of all people—queer, straight, or narrow-minded. We believe the queer community, however we live and define ourselves, has a stake in making this world more free for everyone.

Hannah Rogers and Meredith Cohen

Table of Contents

page 4 The ascent out of catholic repression: Stephan D ry's personal account of coming out
Prudish Engineers: Public affection makes some engineers squirm

page 5 The writing on the wall: McGill's graffiti wars

page 6 Queers and Colour: Racism and ignorance still exist in the queer community
Setting up new icons: Reconciling queer and cultural identities

page 7 Whipping the pigs into shape: Montr al's queer community fights systematic police brutality.

page 8-9 Transing Gender: The historical erasure of gender outlaws

page 10

Queer HIV+ women battle the medical establishment to maintain reproductive rights
World Watch

page 11

Thou shalt not be queer: The politics of the religious right

page 12

Once they were enemies: The contribution of lesbian-feminist to feminism

page 13

Hermaphrodites with attitude: Intersexuals fight the medical establishment
Caught in the middle: Bisexuals fight for a space of their own

page 14

Liberals lag behind the times: Federal political parties not up to par on queer issues
World Watch

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CANADIAN

MINISTER OF REVENUE

The Honourable Jane Stuart
Minister of National Revenue
Connaught Building
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MacKenzie Avenue
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K1A 0L5

The Honourable Jane Stewart:

We are writing this letter to express our concern about the pending appeal of *Little Sister's Bookstore vs. Canada Customs*. In the future, we as Canadians demand protection of our rights and freedoms that are guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Human Rights. Until the systematic seizure of gay, lesbian, bisexual, feminist and transgender literature by Canada Customs is put to an end, our rights continue to be denied.

In the January 1996 ruling, Justice Kenneth J. Smith established that Canada Customs administration of Tariff Code 9956(a) results in arbitrary consequences, and that a great many of the Customs classifications are qualitatively questionable. Furthermore, he stated that many publications, particularly books, are ruled obscene without adequate evidence. We, as Canadians, insist upon an injunction to curb the capabilities of Customs officials in seizing books without due cause.

We perceive their ability to do so as a strategic method of censoring the free flow of thoughts and ideas in this country. Their seizures silence voices of dissent that are paramount to the intellectual vitality of our nation. Velled in the paternalistic diction of "morality," these seizures create a cultural vacuum, silencing voices before they can ever be heard.

The acts of censorship on behalf of Canada Customs are an affront to all Canadians, and do not belong in a democratic country. The restricted entry of selected images and voices is not only a glaring violation of the integrity of freedom of expression, but is also a form of dictating what are legitimate and illegitimate modes of expression. These kinds of judgements are not acceptable and are not for the state to decide.

— Meredith Cohen and Hannah Rogers

(your name here)

CUT ALONG THIS LINE AND SEND



QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

McGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

BY STEPHAN D'ERI

Coming out story

I was raised in a small Northern Ontario town called New Liskeard from the age of three through nineteen. I started noticing my attraction to males as soon as I became a teenager. One of my favourite pastimes in high school was watching guys in the library. I always denied these attractions, and never at any time did I think I was gay. I was the target of many comments but always laughed at them because I knew I wasn't gay! Being gay was one of the worst things someone could be, or so my friends would say. I never had any relationships, either straight or gay, except for a short one with a persistent girl.

My Catholic upbringing never let me think about that possibility. In fact, my religion condemned same-sex relationships. I knew no gay men nor lesbians. Role models were nonexistent. Where would you turn to? I remember once finding a *Playgirl* magazine and it excited me so much, I brought it home to keep. Since I found the pictures were stimulating, I came to the conclusion that there was something wrong with me. I ended up burning the magazine in the fireplace.

Even after moving to Toronto to study at York University, I was still confused about my feelings. I still felt some attraction to men, but I actually fell in love with a woman. She was the best friend I had ever had, and the only reason I never made a move on her was that I respected her too much and sex would have destroyed our intimate friendship. Rumours were flying around that we were sleeping together and once we convinced people we weren't, a second round of rumours started that I was gay. I denied it to everybody,

even to my best friend. I had thought of going to a meeting of the Transgendered, Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay Alliance at York (TBLGAY's) but my fear was too intense. In one of my courses, we had to read about homosexuals and two gay men came to talk to my class. I seriously thought of talking to the men about how I felt. Again, my fear and shyness prevented me from doing anything. After a while, I was submerged in work, and had no time to consider my sexual feelings.

In my fourth year I met another special person. It was my first relationship with a woman. Although we had much in common, we had different tempers which led to a break-up of the relationship after only 2 months. Our sexual contact was infrequent and mainly consisted of foreplay. I had many problems satisfying her since I had no idea what I was doing! I didn't feel much sexual attraction and thought about other people during our sexual encounters.

In the end, that relationship was an eye-opener for me. I realised that I still wasn't attracted to women and that I had no interest in having sex with them. At the time, I concluded that I was just an asexual person. I completed my first York degree in 1991 still a lonely and confused person.

During my graduate studies, when I had more time to myself, I once again noticed I was attracted to men, and this time, I decided to act on my feelings. I started reading the personal ads. I was still frightened by the whole thing, and would only call "Manline" from my office. Not one of my friends knew of my feelings. Finally, by April of 1992, I admitted to myself it was alright to be attracted to other men and I responded to one phone ad. Several days later, I got a response in my voice mail box and excitedly left my new friend a phone number to contact me. Our first con-

versation was difficult for me since he was already out of the closet and very confident about his own sexuality. We nevertheless became friends. I told him I was probably bisexual. He was nice enough to slowly show me around the gay community in Toronto and he took me to my first gay bar. He also gave me my first gay sexual relationship, and that convinced me that I was in fact gay.

By the time summer came around, I had come out to myself and was quite content with the fact I had come to terms with my sexuality. It was, however, a very rough period of my life. I needed some counselling and frequent conversations with my gay friend. I became physically ill because of the stress I was experiencing. I also had to lie to many of my friends and family about what was happening in my life. I will remember the summer of 1992 as my coming out season. It was a very painful experience although my sister, mother, father and all of my friends accepted my gay sexuality. It was surprising that they all felt this way considering some of the stories I had heard. I had lifted a great weight off my shoulders.

Since that fabled summer, I have learned that being out of the closet does not necessarily mean happiness. It does relieve some of the stress, but coming to terms with being part of a minority is painful at times, although I now see it as a source of personal strength and motivation. Coming out of the closet can certainly prove to be a painful experience, but the results are well worth it. Now that I'm associated with McGill, I am happy to have a group where I can talk to other people who have gone through similar experiences. If you feel the need to talk to other people about your sexuality, LBGT is there for you!

Engineers revisit the Victorian age

BY MARK HARRON

Engineers are not homophobic, just prudish — according to representatives of the Engineering Undergraduate Society (EUS) and the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU).

Last Wednesday, two poll clerks assigned to oversee the voting station in the McConnell Engineering building were chided for "inappropriate behaviour."

The clerks, two women, were allegedly engaging in public displays of affection, prompting Latif Jina, Senator of EUS, to lodge a complaint to SSMU VP Internal Affairs, Mark Feldman and Elections Coordinator Chris Muldoon.

Jina claims that he was responding to a "handful" of complaints from students and decided that the situation had to be rectified. He stressed that the complaint was made "irrespective [sic] of gender or orientation."

Muldoon passed the complaint on to the clerks, telling them to be more discreet.

"The complaint was lodged such that the poll clerks were acting in a way that made people uncomfortable to vote," said Muldoon.

However, the clerks — Lela Kouyoumdjian and Melanie Fearon — claim that their so-called "public display of affection" amounted to nothing more than sitting on each

other's laps and holding hands. Moreover, Kouyoumdjian and Fearon received no personal complaints and were



given no indication from voters that they were uncomfortable.

"I don't really understand," said Kouyoumdjian, "We were totally friendly, chatty. There was no problem at all. All the

Poll clerks intimidate voters with 'inappropriate behaviour'

voters went away smiling."

Kouyoumdjian and Fearon are angry about the way the situation was handled.

"The onus was on him [Muldoon] as our boss to defend us," said Kouyoumdjian. "Instead, he suggested that having a man and woman work at the booth would be better."

Fearon felt that if anything, their presence could only be construed positively.

"Due to the homophobic reputation of engineering, which I personally believe has a basis in truth, if you have two queer women acting affectionately at a polling station, some queer voters might feel more comfortable. It wasn't my intention to make people feel uncomfortable, by its also not my intention to alter my personality or my personal freedom."

Mark Feldman, VP Internal Affairs, insists that the complaint was not homophobic. "It was just about decorum," said Feldman. "If it was a man and a woman involved, it would have turned out exactly the same. It is not an LBGT issue."

At the time of publication, no disciplinary actions had been taken against Fearon and Kouyoumdjian, though there is still the possibility that Council may vote to suspend their remuneration.

In an effort to confirm their right to behave as affectionately as any heterosexual couple, Kouyoumdjian, Fearon, and anyone who wishes to join them, will be staging a kiss-in in the Engineering cafeteria at noon today.

Additional reporting by Meredith Cohen

4

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

Out of the closet, into the cubicle

Homophobia lurks in the darker corners of McGill

BY MARIKO TAMAKI

Have you been to the bathroom lately?

For students studying at McGill University, going to the bathroom is no longer one of those menial day to day chores that can be simply brushed under the carpet of life. Thanks to a blossoming new group of graffiti artists sporting their opinions in bathrooms across campus, going to the bathroom has become an exercise in moral discourse.

Pushing into one of the central stalls at McGill's Leacock Building basement bathrooms (Women's), unsuspecting patrons are bombarded with a debate that has

raged in courtrooms, political arenas, classrooms and now the WC. No longer, it appears, is the average student content with simplistic Halkus or confessions of love (e.g. 'Jesse loves Johanna (or Johnny)'). Rather, the typical message in today's bathrooms appears to be something along the line of 'HOMOSEXUALITY IS A

DISEASE!' In this way, the bathroom becomes a modern day soap box for queer (and anti-queer) politics.

And when you think about it, bathroom cubicles are the perfect locations for the sporting of such opinions. The cubicle is both private and public. You can spend all day in there if you like, working with pen, marker or house key, scratching in your point of view in complete anonymity. At the same time, you can expect your opinions to be viewed by several captive audiences of one everyday.

But moving away from the phenomenon of this sort of artistic and political expression, it is important to note the more poignant issue of content. Even in a school as 'liberal' as McGill, these potty politics are sometimes just that: hate literature fit for the can.

'Human rights to all,' one person writes, 'except Nazis and Homosexuals.' On another wall, an anonymous woman writes, 'Homos get help.' All the rhetoric that you almost never hear spoken in public confronts you face to face in the bathroom. It shatters the obviously naïve belief that we as students are attempting to do something about our ignorance through education. The argument of the small-minded still exists; it has merely relocated, lurking in the darker corners of campus, waiting to jump out at the unsuspecting.

Another dark corner where you might expect to find such scribbled opinions is in McGill's own

McLennan-Redpath Resource Centre, not necessarily in the bathrooms, in this case, but in the books themselves. The titles are too numerous to name (but look up the anthology *Gender, Sexuality and Popular Fiction*, if you're really curious). The jokes are too banal and typical to record here, but the overall message of ignorance and homophobia is clear. Homophobic people, obviously suffering from a 'disease' of their own, still exist; they use our bathrooms and read our books, and they have writing utensils. Be afraid.

Fortunately, queer and queer-positive students do strike back. In one stall at Leacock there was the following message: 'Everybody should just mind their own business and get a life.'

'This is a simplistic solution,' someone else replied. 'If everyone simply minded their own business we'd all be a bunch of shel-

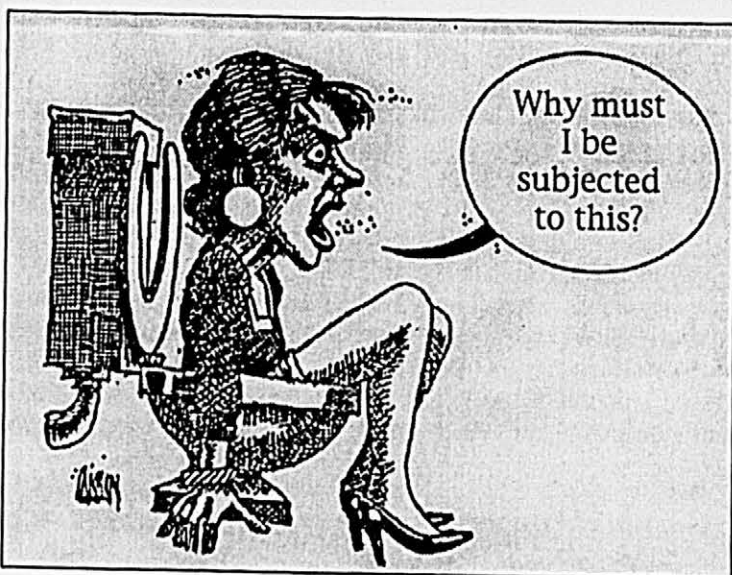
tered, ignorant, self-involved losers in need of a substantial life.'

Should this sort of scribbling be simply ignored? If so, what are the consequences? For many queers at McGill, especially those still in the closet, this kind of hateful rhetoric is the first thing they are confronted with on campus. Not exactly the sort of material that inspires one to embrace their identity and desires.

In confronting this issue, I have to ask if writing back with messages like 'Queer Power' and 'It all comes down to one thing: Respect to all, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity or religion,' is effectual in combating the homophobia that obviously continues to thrive in an 'open-minded' campus such as McGill's?

These statements are all well and good, I think, but they buy into the essential flaw of this particular method of debate. For what frightens me most about this kind of graffiti warfare is its anonymity. What is it about the issue of sexuality that allows this sort of dialogue to thrive in such a faceless and cowardly manner?

Essentially the debate of the legitimacy of sexual orientation is one that remains in the closet. It is still an argument that can only be waged behind closed doors. It is my opinion that this cannot continue, that in order to make any difference it must be the task of queer and queer-positive students to take this argument out of the closet and into the public arena. Only then can we hope to shed light on these darker corners of McGill and greater 'society,' as well.



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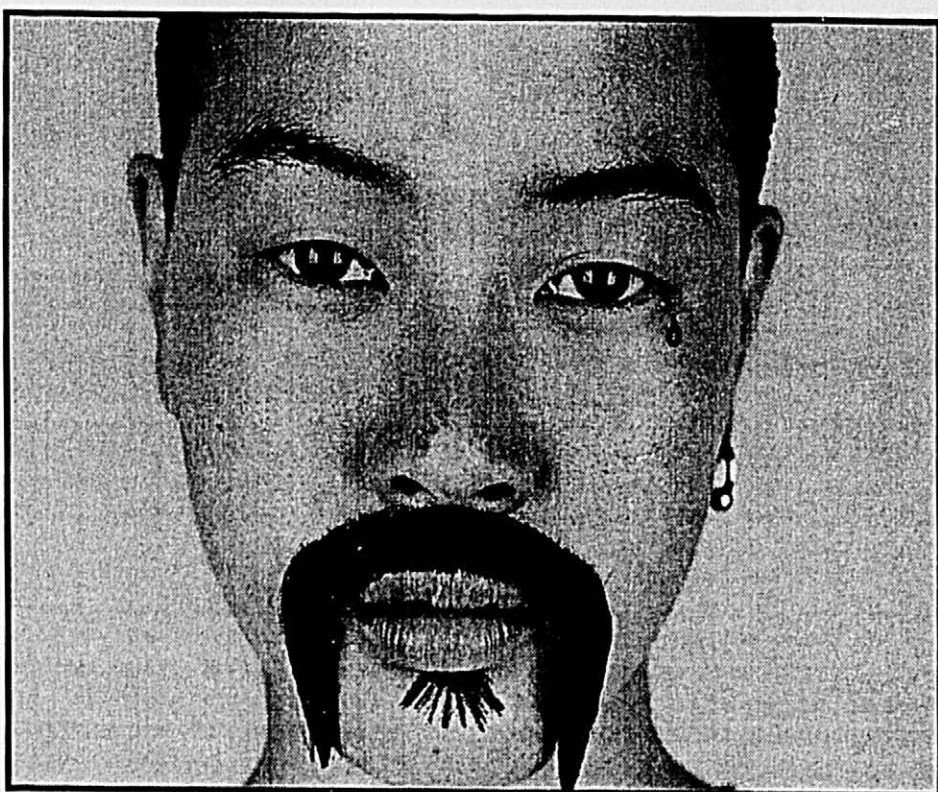
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Double Race and the

BY DARRELL TAN

The existence of a 'cultural mosaic' is evident in virtually all aspects of Canadian society, and the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities are no exception. The community directory in Toronto's bi-weekly *X-tra* magazine, for instance, includes advocacy, support and social groups for Blacks, Asians, Southeast Asians, South Asians, Muslims, Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Italians, Portuguese and Latinos.

This diversity has not developed evenly throughout the community, however, and according to Atif Mani, a coordinator of the University of Toronto's Queer International group (QUINT), 'Queer communities in major urban centres like Montréal and Toronto are so Westernised... a lot of people can't relate to that.'

The pages of mainstream North American queer magazines depict countless images of Caucasian women and men, but seldom any people of colour. While the advent of queers gaining a voice within 'mainstream society'

has required a greater recognition of diversity, ironically we have failed to fulfill this necessity within our own community.

In her acclaimed book *Virtual Equality*, Urvashi Vaid discusses how 'the unchallenged racism... within the gay and lesbian movement [is] on the rise.' She

suggests that a major reason for this is that the community has 'not articulated clearly how sexual identity, race, gender and economic realities are interconnected.'

Though it may be surprising to some, forms of racism are endemic in much of the queer subculture; 'Just because you're gay doesn't mean you're enlightened,' mused a friend of mine over coffee once.

Entering the world of gay and lesbian bars, one feels the community's racism more than elsewhere. In cities like Vancouver and Toronto, the large East Asian population has resulted in a conscious, prejudiced dichotomy between 'white' and 'Asian' in the minds of all parties.

In male bars, vicious gossip about 'rice queens' (white men who prefer Asian partners) and 'potato queens' (Asian men who prefer Caucasians) abounds, as members of some races exoticise members of others.

In Montréal, because the bar clientele is more ethnically homogenous, visible minorities in this city often face problems of isolation. Often, however, racism takes more subtle forms than stigmatisation and exclusion.

'Racism' is too strong a word', says Jean-Pierre Chew of Gals et Lesbiennes Asiatiques de Montréal (GLAM). 'I think it's more a matter of ignorance towards cultures other

than Québécois.'

For this reason, many culture-specific queer groups have been established in which people can meet, discuss experiences and promote pride in their cultures and sexual orientations. In addition to GLAM, Montréal is home to the Asociação de Gays y Lesbianas Latinas Americanas, McGill's upcoming Queer People of Colour discussion group, and the queer-friendly Women of Colour Collective, a project of QPIRG McGill.

COMING OUT – AND COMING OUT AGAIN

A workshop conducted by QUINT at Ontario's recent *Other Young Lives II* LBG youth conference, concisely summed up a problem faced by many queer youth of colour in its title – 'Just because I came out doesn't mean I fit in.'

'We have to come out and come out again,' explains Atif Mani of QUINT. 'After dealing with our sexuality, we have to deal with breaking away from a lot of traditions that we've grown up with.'

According to Mani, one of the main issues for South Asians is the expectation of following family traditions like arranged marriages. He notes that many 'are faced with their parents determining who their lifelong partners are going to be, without realising that the children may not be attracted to the opposite sex.'

Regarding East Asians, Jean-Pierre Chew of GLAM explains: 'Our values are different.' In these cultures, 'the biggest cause of difference is that shame is present; there is a big concern with bringing dishonour to the family.'

Heidi Karst of the Chinese Neighbourhood Society of Montréal contends that for many Chinese 'sex is such a taboo subject; people don't like to discuss it in their family.' For this reason, Karst is establishing an LBG youth component in the Society's current AIDS community project.

Black queers are often subjected to homophobia stemming from movements within the Black community. Ameri-

Resident Alien

BY ATIF SIDDIQI

Arriving in Hollywood as a young adult from Pakistan to study fashion and come out, I had stars in my eyes. Not finding a sense of community, gay or otherwise, I became a star in my own eye. Migrating in March 1993 I landed and planted a seed (myself) in Montréal, and have since grown to become a star in everyone's eyes, but perhaps not in someone's eye. In my eye I have seen the sense of community here in Montréal, queer, coloured and mainstream. At least there is one, or several, compared to other places where there are not.

Perhaps, I felt 'fitting in' was not enough, and I needed to belong to a place, instead of feeling alien. This resulted in the creation of Saathi (South Asian Queer Cultural Group), which now feels like family here in this desh pardesh (home away from home) with many friendships and artistic, social, community building activities. Many people, queer or straight, try – and try very hard – to fit into a new society, but never feel like they belong. I, like them, never felt my sexual preference or

identity was enough to feel a part of the mosaic of the queer community living in the West. My artistic and cultural identities are a stronger and more valid reason to form a sense of belonging and similarity with a group of people however large or small.

Western cultural icons like Hollywood movie stars and Pop/Rock music stars are not the only images we grow up with in countries in Asia, Africa, and Central/South America etc., though we are influenced by these 'most glamorous white' images through the media. It is really difficult to see ourselves reflected in that illusion. It is not our movie and we don't have very many of our 'own' role models (i.e. gay/lesbian/queer celebrities, intellectuals, artists, leaders to emulate or identify with). We are writing our own history and striving for each other and society at large, both here and everywhere.

Traditionally, our religious, social, and family structures are closely knit and embracing in respect to our relationships. Thus it is difficult to assimilate into a North American society which is isolationist and strives for independence rather than interdependence. We are not necessarily exposed to the bar/club culture, dating (which isn't an important facet of queer life anyway) and relating to other gay/lesbian/bisexual people, regardless of class and cultural background, on the basis of sexual desire alone. Our skin colour renders us 'foreign' regardless of whether we were born here or the number of years spent here. We are alien entities with different lifestyles within the alternative/

queer lifestyle.

Communication, which is the most important factor in establishing a relationship with a person, oneself, or a society, is not the easiest here. Whatever the manner of our expression, language, dress, accent, gestures, symbols, metaphors, physicality, mentality, emotionality, spirituality and their combined reality, can sometimes be experienced as 'alien' to others on earth.

Personally, I have made a decision to not live my life and experience this lifetime feeling like I don't belong in the South-Asian sub-continent because of my sexual preference. Nor like I don't belong anywhere else because of my ethnicity. We all belong everywhere. It's no longer spiritually correct to believe oneself to be separate, a victim, marginal, and disempowered in any way. I wish we could all forget to think of ourselves in the negative ways. Only to remember our Truths.

Pride Day! Aza di dol (Give me freedom)
Iszat dail (Give me respect)
O Saathi ral (My Companion)

There is no turning back,
For the sun always sets,
On the closet black,
At the end of our rainbow.
-excerpt from 'Pride Day' by Atif Siddiqi 1996



QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

identity?

queer community



can Minister Louis Farrakhan, for instance, once proclaimed, "Those of you - who are homosexual - you weren't born

[that] way brother - You never had a strong male image... [These] are conditions that are forced on black men. You're filling up the jails and they're turning you into freaks in the jails."

Similarly, gay Latinos must often contend with prejudice stemming from the traditional Hispanic concepts of masculinity, known as *machismo*.

DOUBLE IDENTITY?

Is there, then, a 'double identity' that needs to be reconciled among queer people of colour? Indeed, many maintain that the person with the most 'tags' is the most oppressed.

But in her recently released book *Asian American Sexualities*, Dana Y. Takagi writes that "marginalisation is not as much about the quantities of experience as it is about qualities of experience."

She reminds us that "Identities whether sourced from sexual desires, racial origins, languages or gender, or class roots, are simply not additive."

The point is not to add up layers of oppression, but to explore their intersections and the issues involved in such multiple identities.

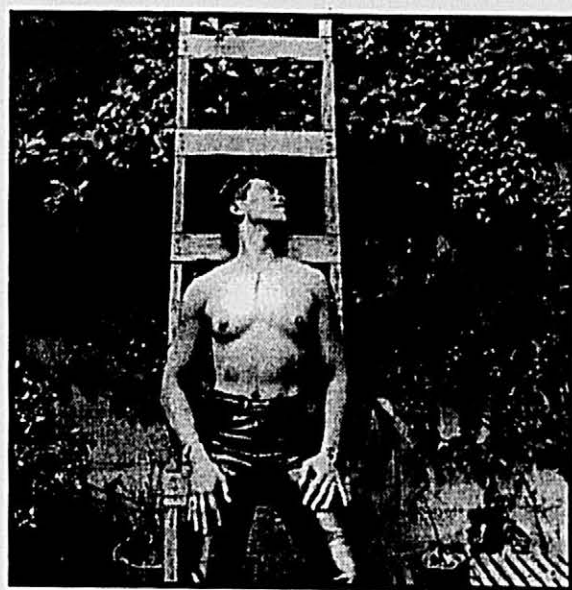


PHOTO BY JILL ROSENER

Queer people of colour face a critical crossroads today as they struggle to reconcile their anomalous identities within cultural and LBG communities, and attempt to strike a balance between excessive ghettoisation and assimilation.

A renewed effort to include queers of colour is needed on the part of cultural groups and LBG groups alike. The development of cultural projects and trends in recent research mark important steps in this direction. Most such projects, however, have been undertaken by queers of colour themselves; an increase in outreach initiatives by Caucasian queer groups is long overdue.

Most importantly, however, we must realise that no amount of theorising about inclusiveness and culture-bound experiences will be sufficient in fighting feelings of isolation among queer people of colour unless accompanied on a real, daily basis by honest efforts to include, empathise with, and celebrate the diversity of ethnicities within our queer communities.

Making peace with the police

BY ANDREA MASON

Montréal's queer community tackles rampant police brutality

The Montréal Urban Community Police Department (MUCPD) has a reputation for being one of the most brutal, homophobic, racist and violent police forces in Canada. And Montréal's queer community has been on the receiving end of this abuse for years.

According to Michael Hendrich, co-ordinator of la Table de concertation des Gais et des Lesbien(ne)s de Grand Montréal, of the 377 instances of violence against queers reported in Montréal in the last year, one-third were complaints against police officers.

Although recent attempts at conciliation have been made, "abusive arrests still occur, people are still insulted and homosexuals are still picked up on pretexts," says Noël St. Pierre, a lawyer specialising in human rights and assistant chair of la Table de concertation.

St. Pierre describes a recent incident involving a transgendered person who was arrested without cause. After lodging a complaint this individual was subjected to increasingly severe harassment. The officers pulled what they assumed was a wig and were left holding a large handful of hair. They also referred to this person as a "transvestite" which St. Pierre described as being "extremely harmful" for transgendered people.

This instance exemplifies the prevailing prejudice of MUCPD officers, particularly towards marginalised members of the queer community, namely transvestites, transgenders and sex workers.

"They are treated impolitely, made fun of and harassed," declares Claudine Metcalfe, director of 'Dire en fin la violence', a committee of la Table de concertation which deals with police-queer relations.

Metcalfe explains that this tendency by the police to treat victims like perpetrators deters people from reporting crimes when they do occur. "They have no confidence in the police or the justice system," she said.

And this reluctance to go to the police leaves members of the queer community vulnerable to attack. According to St. Pierre, this "identifies people as easy targets for crime because they usually don't defend themselves or report the incidents."

Last summer, the Morality Squad of the MUCPD initiated a crackdown on sexual activity in public places after receiving complaints about men having sex in Parc Lafontaine. According to Metcalfe, this led to increased targeting of gay men.

"They left heterosexuals alone but would stop a man walking through the park by himself or two men together," she said.

Despite these glaring problems, relations between the MUCPD and Montréal's queer community are being worked on.

"On a scale of one to ten, we're up from zero to a four or five," commented Hendrich.

Hendrich cited improvements such as the establishment of the Multi-Party Table which includes representatives from la Table de concertation, the MUCPD, the city of Montréal, the Sûreté du Québec, the RCMP, the Human Rights Commission and the Regional Health Board.

The Multi-Party Table meets once a month and provides a forum where problem cases are brought forth. St. Pierre

comments that these meetings provide an opportunity where "police can't tow the party line."

At the administrative level, the lines of communication are opening up. "We have a good relationship with [MUCPD Police Chief, Jacques] Duscheneau," concedes St. Pierre, "We've come a long way."

Yves Manseau, the co-ordinator of Citoyen(nes) Opposés(es) à la Brutalité Policière declares that "from nothing, [the gay community] has done something... and the police have improved their relationship with the gay community as a whole."

But there is still a long way to go.

"The police department is a para-military organisation and how things decided at the top get interpreted by individual officers is another issue. They bring their own opinions to the job," says Hendrich.

Manseau also identifies the isolation of various groups as a hindrance in combatting police brutality. He suggests that groups such as the black and queer communities that experience problems with the police should come together as a coalition to effectively bring about change.

"You cannot go piece-by-piece to make peace with the police," Manseau comments. "It's a global issue. Human rights are for everyone. Solutions come when we all work together."

Hendrich concurs. "Problems of lack of respect affect everyone. We need a co-operative coalition to solve common problems."



DAILY PHOTO BY FRANÇOIS SCHNEIDER

The pigs at work...

7

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996



TRANSING THE GENDER

A review of Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors*

"I grew up thinking that the hatred I faced because of my gender expression was simply a by-product of human nature, and that it must be my fault that I was a target for such outrage. I don't want any young person to ever believe that's true again, and so I wrote this book to lay bare the roots and tendrils of sex and gender oppression."

These are the words of Leslie Feinberg from his book *Transgender Warriors*. For those of you who don't know, Feinberg has been at the forefront of the queer literary movement with his book *Stone Butch Blues*. *Transgender Warriors* is a second installment of Feinberg's semi-autobiographical work.

Feinberg takes a look at the construction of gender through time and across cultures. This is a book stemming from Feinberg's own feelings of isolation because of his gender expression. This is a book about transing boundaries. This is a book of protest.

Beginning with the non-recognition of fluid gender expression, Feinberg delineates the source of his internalized feelings of isolation and self-accusation. Even more disturbing is the pervasive nature of this denial which led him to believe that a) he was abnormal and b) hatred of difference was to be expected. Feinberg then proceeds to analyze the denial of trans existence and chronicles how trans behaviour has been a long tradition in world cultures. What is so compelling about this book is that it is both the story of one brave person and his personal awakening and the vehicle through which he attempts to provide the space for a similar epiphany for many more people.

THE NEXT THING IN TEXTBOOKS?

No, this is not a self-help book. And no, this is not an autobiography. This is a history book, though you might not think so to look at it. It's not your run-of-the-mill history book, in other words—though perhaps it ought to be. *Transgender Warriors* combines Feinberg's personal story with a rich history of trans people that spans cultures, continents, centuries, and classes—a history that has been almost entirely ignored. Feinberg's book begins the long and arduous process of writing this history and of looking at it in terms of its significance to himself and to contemporary problems like homophobia and sexism. It provides a crucial grounding for the modern trans liberation movement.

The first word to describe this book is accessible. We found the text to be clear and concise instead of verbose and complex. This makes the history extremely readable to the majority of non-academic readers. Feinberg makes a complex and misunderstood issue available to his audience without oversimplifying. Yet this book is also attractive to theorists with its broad bibliography and provocative discussion of feminism and homophobia.

This is not an academic text. It is a collage of personal narrative, extensive research into history, anthropology and various cultures and times. Feinberg does not attempt to pretend complete objectivity. He lets his personality shine through his writing and imbue it with a sense of urgency, emphasizing to us that what he's writing about is not a static, dead subject, but something that affects people's lives every day.

However, Feinberg does give us certain caveats through which to read her book. She acknowledges the difficulty inherent in applying contemporary North American concepts of transing gender to people from different cultures and different periods of history. In an attempt to minimize culture blindness in his analysis, he has collaborated with people from the cultures in question, for example, in having them write captions and stories to go along with the many photographs that illustrate and exemplify his words. Also, he explicitly states that the examples he uses of transgendered people from the past must be taken with a grain of salt: the individuals in question may not have identified themselves as transgendered in the sense in which that term is used today. Yet at the same time, their behaviour can be said to have been transgendered.

The hows and whys of re-writing history

We mentioned that *Transgender Warriors* is in many ways a piece of historical, anthropological and archeological research. In his desire to end his sense of isolation, Feinberg attempted to delve into the annals of history and see if there was any mention of transgendered people—of gen-

der fluidity in general—that had somehow been overlooked by his high school history teachers. He documents his findings in *Transgender Warriors* and they are astounding. What emerges is the sense of a presence of transing dating from prehistory onward, in cultures all over the world.

Feinberg concentrates mostly on Western European history (because of its direct relationship to North America). What is perhaps most intriguing is that trans people were highly visible in battles against oppression all over Europe. The most famous example of these figures is, of course, Joan of Arc, but Feinberg pulls many more out of her pocket: Rebecca and her daughters, Mère Folle and her children, numerous women who passed as men throughout their lives and were accepted as sailors on ships or officers in armies.

The reason this is so astounding is that none of these examples have received so much as a mention in a history class or a note in a history book—with the exception of Joan. And even that brief mention abstained from examining gender fluidity. How many of us were told that Joan was burned at the stake for dressing like a man? Or that it was an edict against cross-dressing in the Bible that led to her conviction? Or that she did it all her life? How many of us even wondered why she dressed like a man?

The easiest way to deal with her cross-dressing is to assume that she wore armour because it was appropriate for battle. That assumption, though, does not elucidate why Rebecca and her daughters or Mère Folle and her children cross-dressed as women to lead uprisings (which, as Feinberg points out, is hardly conventional battle dress).

Outside of Europe, Feinberg presents examples of trans behaviour in other cultures such as the *berdache* tradition in many aboriginal Nations of North America. Feinberg notes that "berdache" was a derogatory term European colonizers used to label any Native person who did not fit their narrow notions of woman and man and, in respect of the wishes of Native people, uses the term "Two-Spirit" instead. In his research for *Transgender Warriors*, Feinberg came upon numerous references to Two-Spirits in the writings of colonizers. One of these mentions that Two-Spirits "are summoned to the Councils, and nothing can be decided without their advice...Through their profession of leading an extraordinary life, they pass for Manitous, —Spirits,— or persons of Consequence. In addition, in many Nations, Two-Spirits were often shamans."

Feinberg also spoke directly with Native people about sex and gender in their cultures in order to learn how it is perceived in the present moment. According to "Chrystos, a brilliant Two-Spirit poet and writer from the Menominee nation, "...The whole concept of gender is more fluid in traditional life. Those paths are not necessarily aligned with your sex, although they may be. People might choose their gender according to their dreams, for example."

In addition, Wesley Thomas, a self-defined *nadleeh*-like Navajo ("a male *nadleeh*... 'would manifest in the world as a female and take a husband and participate in tribal life as a female person'"), found in his fieldwork investigating sex and gender in the Navajo culture that when, "I began to identify gender on a continuum—meaning placing female at one end and male on the other end—I placed forty-nine different gender identifications in between."

Tragically, modern Native communities have had to reconstruct their past because of the ravages of colonialism on their cultures. Yet from the words of the colonizers themselves ("[Balboa] saw men dressed like women; Balboa learnt that they were sodomites and threw the king and forty others to be eaten by his dogs, a fine action of an honorable and Catholic Spaniard") as well as from the testimonies of people like Chrystos, a picture is drawn of a

bigender: people who have both a feminine side and a masculine side; used to be lumped together under the category of cross-dressers

drag queen: (see female impersonator)

female impersonator (FI): a male who on specific occasions cross-dresses and employs stereotypical feminine dialogue, voice and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people.

drag king: a female who on specific occasions cross-dresses and employs stereotypical masculine dialogue, voice and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people.

gender: those personality characteristics and social roles normally attributed to one physical sex or the other. The terms 'man' or 'masculine' and 'woman' and 'feminine' are normally used to describe the genders, while 'male' and 'female' are used to describe the physical sexes.

gender-bender: mixing what is considered 'masculine' and what is considered 'feminine' in order to make people question the validity of these roles.

gender identity: how one thinks of oneself in terms of one's gender.

gender community: colloquial for transgender community. People who identify as not having a gender identity that matches societies' roles for their birth physical sex, or those who identify with the gender community. Members of the gender community often do not identify as members of the sexual minority community.

gender dysphoria: 1. unhappiness or discomfort experienced by an individual about one's gender role assigned by society based on one's physical sex. Unhappiness or discomfort may be too mild to describe the experience for many individuals. Also referred to as **gender euphoria** when spoken of in the positive manner. 2. To interact with society as a member of a specific gender (i.e. as a man or a woman).

his: gender neutral pronoun; derives from her/his

intersexual: those who formerly were called hermaphrodites.

passing man: a woman who lives and is accepted as a man

passing woman: a man who lives and is accepted as a woman

sex: male or female, depending on one's primary sex organs.

she: gender neutral pronoun — pretty obvious

trans: those who move across prescribed boundaries of gender.

transgender: 1. somebody who lives full time in the gender opposite to their anatomy or 2. an umbrella term that includes everyone who challenges the boundaries of sex and gender, i.e. transsexuals, transgenders, transvestites, transgenderists, bigenders, drag queens, drag kings, cross-dressers, masculine women, feminine men, intersexuals, androgynes, cross-genders, shape-shifters, passing women, passing men, gender-benders, gender-blenders, bearded women, and women bodybuilders who have crossed the line of what is considered socially acceptable for a female body

transsexual: An individual who is sexually dysphoric. An individual who's gender identity is opposite to that of his/her physical sex. Normally desires modification of the physical body.

ze: gender neutral pronoun; derives from she/he.



YOU'RE SO EXOTIC!
MEAN I'M GAY.
INTRIGUE ME. MY ATTRACTION TO YOU DOESN'T
MEAN I'M GAY.
BEST OF BOTH WORLDS. DO YOU HAVE A PENIS?
YOU'RE THE THIRD SEX!
YOU'RE THE THIRD SEX!

self-portrait

!

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1998

R DIVER

BY KLARA A. DANASZAK AND DEREK P. FUNG

long historical tradition of gender fluidity in Native cultures that could not be extinguished even by genocide. As Chrystos says, "most of the nations that I know of traditionally had more than two genders," and this is still true today.

THE POINT BEING...

With page after page unfolding these neglected histories, you begin to feel the enormity of what Feinberg's book is bringing to the surface. Much like the re-writing of history to include women, *Transgender Warriors* is a re-writing of history to emphasize the role, fluidity, and politics of gender.



PHOTOGRAPHY: I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ATTRACTED TO HAIRY WOMEN. YOU'RE REALLY A WOMAN. I THINK TRANSGENDER IS SEXY. I LIKE VERY BUTCH WOMEN. YOU'RE THE

Portrait by photographer Loren Cameron

divide and conquer technique that attempted to equate difference with abnormality and therefore make difference the subject of hatred.

3) For this to work, the idea of gender fluidity as ac-

cepted and even honoured had to be discounted and forgotten; transing could not be taken seriously. So transing suffered cultural erasure.

4) This erasure resulted in a predominant view today that gender fluidity is a recent, unnatural, abnormal phenomenon that must be stopped before it spreads to innocent and unwary children.

The importance of *Transgender Warriors* is that it denies the erasure of trans existence and claims loudly that *transing* isn't a recent development, but rather the *repression* and *oppression* of transing is. This claim has the potential to change the common perception of transing and gender fluidity as abnormal and to allow their inclusion into the broad spectrum of natural human differences.

THE WORDS TO SAY IT

Unfortunately, even if we acknowledge that such an inclusion is important and even essential, there are other difficulties. Feinberg raises the issue of language and its impact on thought in her discussion of Native concepts of gender. For example, in the ancient language of the White Mountain Apache nation, there were no distinct pronouns. Instead, there were three variations of language itself: "the way women spoke, the way men spoke, and the ceremonial language." A Two-Spirit could speak all three. In contrast, English has only three pronouns (she, he, it), two sex nouns (man, woman), and two gender nouns (female, male). Traditionally, sex and gender have been assumed to go together. But what do you do when you don't fit easily into any of these word-categories? How do you define yourself? What do people call you? What do you call yourself?

Feinberg demonstrates the difficulty language can present: "I am transgendered. I was born female, but my masculine gender expression is seen as male. It's not my sex that defines me, and it's not my gender expression. It's the fact that my gender expression appears to be at odds with my sex. Do you understand? It's the social contradiction between the two that defines me."

The implication is that the English language is restrictive—at least in terms of gender expression—and that this restriction of language affects thought and affects the ease with which gender fluidity can be expressed and accepted in society. If we don't have a word for something, that something becomes very difficult to imagine, to comprehend in any significant way. This is one of the problems facing transgendered people: their reality is inexpressible and therefore locked within them to a large extent.

To combat this, words are being coined in an attempt to match the fluidity that exists in gender expression. We have been using some of them: ze (she/he), hir (his/her), transing, transgender. And more are being added every day. To help make more sense of it all please consult the glossary that we have put together.

I am what I am. End of story.

Basically what it comes down to is that gender is not a

static polarity. There are as many possibilities for gender expression as there are people, because each individual is unique and must make his/her/hir own choices about her/hir/his own gender. Which brings us (and Feinberg) to a crucial point: the definition of one's gender is the prerogative of the individual—not the legal system, not the medical institution, not the language, not society in general, not history. Each person has the fundamental right to establish hir/his/her own identity and to have that identity be recognized.

In order for these fundamental rights to be won, Feinberg repeatedly stresses the importance of all oppressed people standing together—whether they consider themselves to be transgendered or not. We can't go on saying "It's not my fight." And it's not a question of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." We must reverse the damage inflicted by the divide-and-conquer mentality. If we allow discrimination against and oppression of one group, we let its ugliness seep in through the cracks and eventually flood the whole basement where we will all drown.

Transgender Warriors is a beginning. As Feinberg herself points out, it has its complications: how do you use contemporary, culturally-based concepts to study people and movements from other times and other cultures? How do you write a history when so much has gone unrecorded and unnoticed? How do you interpret past events when there are no written documents that can help to explain their significance?

Despite this, the book does something unprecedented in bringing all these tantalizing bits of information together and showing us that this is an area that can and must be delved into more deeply. Feinberg has taken the first step by giving long overdue attention to the fluidity of gender in history. It's up to us to step into hir shoes and keep walking.

the definition of one's gender is the prerogative of the individual—not the legal system, not the language, not society in general, not history. Each person has the fundamental right to establish hir/his/her own identity and to have that identity be recognized.

International Bill of Gender Rights

The restatement of the International Bill of Gender Rights (IBGR) was first drafted in committee and adopted by the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, Inc. at that organization's second annual meeting, held in Houston, Texas, August 26-29, 1993.

The IBGR combines and expands from two earlier documents authored separately by Jo Ann Roberts of Pennsylvania and Sharon Stuart of New York.

The IBGR strives to express fundamental human and civil rights from a gender perspective. However, the ten rights enunciated below are not to be viewed as special rights applicable to a particular interest group. Nor are these rights limited in application to persons for whom gender identity and role issues are of paramount concern. All ten parts of the IBGR are universal rights which can be claimed and exercised by every human being.

The IBGR is a theoretical expression which has no force of law absent its adoption by legislative bodies and recognition of its principles by courts of law, administrative agencies and international bodies such as the United Nations.

However, individuals are free to adopt the truths and principles expressed in the IBGR, and to lead their lives accordingly.

The right to define gender identity

All human beings carry within themselves an ever-unfolding idea of who they are and what they are capable of achieving. The individual's sense of self is not determined by chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role. Thus, the individual's identity and capabilities cannot be circumscribed by what society deems to be masculine or feminine behavior. It is fundamental that individuals have the right to define, and to redefine as their lives unfold, their own gender identities, without regard to chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role.

The right to free expression of gender identity

Given the right to define one's own gender identity, all human beings have the corresponding right to free expression of their self-defined gender identity.

The right to secure and retain employment and to receive just compensation

Given the economic structure of modern society, all human beings have a right to train for and to pursue an occupation or profession as a means of providing shelter, sustenance, and the necessities and bounty of life, for themselves and for those dependent upon them, to secure and retain employment, and to receive just compensation for their labor regardless of gender identity, chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role.

The right of access to gendered space and participation in gendered activity

Given the right to define one's own gender identity and the corresponding right to free expression of a self-defined gender identity, no individual should be denied access to a space or denied participation in an activity by virtue of a self-defined gender identity which is not in accord with chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role.

The right to control and change one's own body

All human beings have the right to control their bodies, which includes the right to change their bodies cosmetically, chemically, or surgically, so as to express a self-defined gender identity.

The right to competent medical and professional care

Given the individual's right to one's own gender identity, and the right to change one's own body as a means of expressing a self-defined gender identity, no individual should be denied access to competent medical or other professional care on the basis of the individual's chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role.

The right to freedom from psychiatric diagnosis or treatment

Given the right to define one's own gender identity, individuals should not be subject to psychiatric diagnosis or treatment solely on the basis of their gender identity or role.

The right to sexual expression

Given the right to a self-defined gender identity, every consenting adult has a corresponding right to free sexual expression.

The right to form committed, loving relationships and enter into marital contracts

Give that all human beings have the right to free expression of self-defined gender identities, and the right to sexual expression as a form of gender expression, all human beings have a corresponding right to form committed, loving relationships with one another, and to enter into marital contracts, regardless of their own or their partner's chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role.

The right to conceive, bear, or adopt children

The right to nurture and have custody of children and to exercise parental capacity

Given the right to form a committed, loving relationship with another, and to enter into marital contracts, together with the right to express a self-defined gender identity and the right to sexual expression, individuals have a corresponding right to conceive and bear children, to adopt children, to nurture children, to have custody of children, and to exercise parental capacity with respect to children, natural or adopted, without regard to chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role, or by virtue of a self-defined gender identity or the expression thereof.

9

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1993

The issue of having sex with men is often taboo in the queer women's community – but that is not to say that it doesn't happen.

"Some lesbians engage in oral, vaginal and anal intercourse with men by choice, force, or necessity" note Rebecca Cole and Sally Cooper, safer-sex educators in New York. "Some are artificially inseminated and some exchange blood and vaginal secretions during sexual contact with women."

In a recently published study of 262 self-identified lesbians, 75% had engaged in sexual intercourse with men during their lifetimes, and under 10% used a condom.

Cole and Cooper point out that queer women can become HIV-infected the same way any woman can, however they continue to be excluded from HIV and AIDS education both in the queer community and among health care professionals.

"AIDS education that ignores lesbians, or supports the notion that lesbians only have sexual contact with women, may be obscuring the various sources of risk in a lesbian's life and may unwittingly be supporting the reluctance of lesbians to confront their personal risks," they comment in recent SIECUS report.

The invisibility of queer women in AIDS/HIV discourse has disturbing repercussions. According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) as of September 30, 1989 there were 79 reported cases of lesbians with AIDS; there have been 103 reported cases of AIDS in bisexual women. There have also been 1 242 women with AIDS, who refused to classify themselves as lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual.

Accepting that HIV and AIDS is a queer women's issue means expanding discussion to recognise their experiences and include their voices in issues facing all women – including reproductive rights.

Queer women who choose to get pregnant often engage in high-risk behaviour.

In an article from the magazine *On Our Backs*, writer, Risa Denenberg explores the risks posed for lesbians who choose to have children. "Fucking a man without using a condom is the easiest, most efficient way to get pregnant. Fucking a stranger may be the best way to minimize the man's paternal interest in the child... These strategies are clearly risky yet common occurrences, since many medical settings will not inseminate unmarried or non-heterosexual women, and the cost of artificial insemination can be prohibitive."

TOUGH CHOICES

Debbie, a queer woman living in Vancouver, said that her doctor reacted negatively when she and her partner chose to start a family. "But the issue was that I was HIV positive, not that I was a lesbian," she commented.

"Being queer doesn't exclude me from being victimised by a system which is very white, very male and very straight," she continued. "Lesbian women have the same needs as straight women when it comes to HIV – medical advice and pre-natal support. The disease doesn't discriminate."

According to Louise Binder, a lawyer and AIDS activist, women are particularly vulnerable when it comes to challenging the medical community because "there is a definite power dynamic at work, where women tend not to be socialised to challenge authority figures telling us what to do."

Within this power dynamic, doctors are given a free rein, to impose their moral judgments on their medical advice. In Debbie's case, concern shifted away from providing her with objective information about the medical implications of her decision to a criticism of her choice based on her doctor's code of ethics. Only after being "reproached" by her doctor for her decision was Debbie told the actual facts that surround being HIV positive and having a

baby.

HIV positive women currently have a 25% chance of infecting their baby with the virus but the risk of transmission is reportedly reduced to 8% with AZT therapy.

The fact that women now have the fastest increasing rate of HIV infection has propelled the protection of reproductive rights to the top of the list of priorities for AIDS activists and HIV positive women. This has meant going head to head with a medical community which has been scrambling to meet the unique needs facing women – and some say falling miserably.

PROTECTION OR REPRESSION?

The issues facing pregnant, HIV positive women are numerous, ranging from sensitising healthcare workers to questions of mandatory pre-natal HIV testing.

"In Quebec, no one can force you to take the test, but it's something we have to constantly guard against," says Binder.

In the United States, two states have recently tabled bills in support of mandatory testing, further eroding women's reproductive rights. Binder also cites the recent official policy reversal by the American Medical Association (AMA) which now endorses the principle of mandatory testing.

While the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has no policy in place regarding mandatory testing, Carolyn Robertson of the CMA claims that "it is an issue brewing across the country and has been discussed at our ethics committee." And in the absence of a clear-cut stance against the policy, activists worry that the CMA will take its cue from the United States.

"What's happening here is almost more pervasive and subtle," comments Chantal Landry, with the Centre for AIDS Services in Montréal. Some women are concerned that HIV tests are being done without them being aware of it. "When you're pregnant you take a bunch of tests – doctors can test women for HIV if they think that they look like they're at risk."

Landry comments that this is equally threatening to women's health as mandatory testing is. Critics say random testing is based on the personal judgments and assumptions of individual doctors, which sometimes clouds medical reasoning.

The underlying bias is that women who appear to be part of what the doctors believe to be a 'high risk' group are targeted rather than those engaging in high risk behavior – which would be every pregnant woman since they have all had unprotected sex.

"The reality is that some doctors look at good, outstanding women and think they don't need to be tested, but if someone who looks like a drug user walks into their office, they make all sorts of assumptions," comments Landry.

SHAKY GROUND

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) is hoping to remedy random and potentially prejudiced screening practices with a recently drafted policy recommending universal counselling. This would involve providing standardised education on HIV and AIDS for all pregnant women.

The guidelines "support the concept of offering HIV screening to every pregnant woman during pregnancy," in a non-coercive manner. The report goes on to suggest that "providers of care to pregnant women should be alert to the possibility of HIV infection and should screen, with consent and with due regard to confidentiality [to] those thought to be at risk."

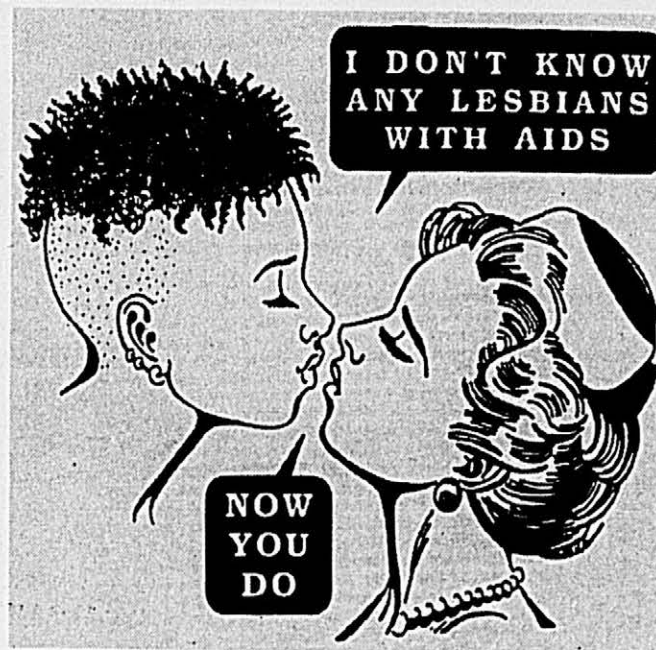
Anrita Paul, coordinator of the National Women and HIV Project, says the policy is long overdue and based on a more solid rationale than the inconsistent testing taking place right now. "Women will be provided with the option of information, not based on who they are, but based on whether or not they are high risk," Paul declared.

The guidelines, however, are non-binding, which means

On the Fringes of the Medical Establishment

Queer Women, HIV and Reproductive Rights

BY SONIA VERMA



healthcare workers have the option of disregarding them.

"The situation now amounts to an incredible disparity between paperwork theory and clinical practice," asserts Chantal Paquet, a Vancouver woman living with HIV. "Women are left standing on the unsteady ground between the two."

But universal counselling will require queer women specifically to trust a medical establishment which has traditionally disregarded them and their needs. As long as the systemic doctor/patient hierarchy remains in tact, queer women will continue to have to challenge both the doctor-knows-best mentality and its traditional ideas of 'women'.

Homosexuals receive lashing in Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabian authorities sentenced 24 Filipino workers to 200 lashes each in late September following their arrest for "homosexual behavior," reported Amnesty International. It is not known what the behavior entailed.

The first 50 lashes were delivered Sept. 30, with the remainder to be spread over three additional sessions, Amnesty reported. Afterward, the Filipinos will be deported. Amnesty urges protest letters, telegrams and telexes to be sent to the following officials:

(1) The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines, His Majesty King Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz, Office of H.M. The King, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

(2) His Royal Highness, Prince Naif bin Abdul-Aziz, Minister of the Interior, P.O. Box 2833, Airport Road, Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Telexes: 404416.

(3) His Royal Highness, Prince Saud al-Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasserliya Street, Riyadh 11124, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Telexes: 405000.

(4) His Excellency, Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ.

Source: Rex Wockner <glb-news@llstserv.aol.com>

10

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

"The Religious Right" and "the Christian Right" seem to be the new buzzwords in North America these days. But it's hard to pinpoint who exactly we are talking about when we use these terms.

The fact is that the 'Religious Right' is actually a nebulous network of ultra conservatives of various religious and political organisations who generally target anyone who does not believe that Christian values are the only true ones to follow.

Some opponents of the Religious Right shrug it off, with the often used pun "The Christian Right is neither," but others view these groups as a powerful force in our society — a force to contend with.

While being a rather loose movement of various, factionalist sects of Christianity — ranging from Baptists to Catholics to Apostolics — they seem to be good at joining forces to combat what they see is the threat of 'liberalism' in North American society.

And the "homosexual agenda" has become synonymous to this liberalism that the Religious Right groups find so intolerable.

CONDEMN OR CONVERT

Because of the diversity of these groups, the attack on the queer community also comes from many fronts — from utter demonisation to active efforts of redemption through



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE CANADA

conversion.

Some, such as Tony Marco who is affiliated with Colorado and America for Family Values, feel that by granting queers human rights — or 'special gay privileges' — all Americans will suffer.

According to Marco, those threatened are 'parents, who fear the influence of homosexual militants on their children... employers, business owners and America's military services, which face coercion to hire, recruit, and promote homosexuals, and criminal action if they attempt to fire homosexuals.'

Marco goes on to say that 'even daycare operators [are] compelled to hire homosexuals to give care to small children.'

The group Exodus International takes a different angle toward 'homosexuals.' The group proclaims that 'the freedom from homosexuality is possible through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.'

While the latter is seen as a 'compassionate approach,' it is equally political and undermining to the queer movement as the approach which demonises anyone other than heterosexuals. Both are part of a continuum that claims being queer is 'immoral behaviour.'

US POLITICS AND THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

It is easy to shrug off the Religious Right as 'extremists,' yet if you think about it, the rhetoric they use is one that permeates less extremist forums as well. In the US, and to a lesser extent in Canada, the views of the Religious Right are increasingly taken on by accepted political figures and it can be found underlying legislation by the government.

Senator Jesse Helms, a Republican from North Carolina is a perfect example. Helms ignited a controversy when he complained that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was funding artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, a photographer whose work is often homoerotic.

Helms' complaint led to the retirement of John E. Frohnmayer, the chairman of the NEA, resulting in a more conservative directorship that exercises censorship. This has a direct impact on the queer art world.

Last Tuesday's elections in the U.S. are also a sign that the Religious Right rhetoric is a powerful force. Pat Buchanan, a notable homophobe who ran for the Repub-

The Christian Right is neither

Politics of the Religious Right

BY HANNAH ROGERS

lican Party presidential candidacy, once said 'the poor homosexuals — they have declared war upon nature, and now nature is extracting an awful retribution: AIDS.'

Though Buchanan was supported by many Americans, he was defeated by the more 'moderate' Bob Dole. Dole is an example of the many different ways in which the Religious Right platform weaves through political agendas. While Dole avoids the outright inflammatory commentary of Buchanan, his espousing of 'family values' falls into a similar vein — one that rejects anyone not in a two person, heterosexual relationship aimed at procreation.

Besides Dole, a number of other Republicans who spout homophobia have been re-elected, including Helms and Strom Thurmond, a Republican from South Carolina.

With these forces at play in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives and the Senate, support for any legislation to improve the lives of queers in the US is slim.

Pressure from the Religious Right also affects those who are considered 'liberal' in the US.

Earlier this year, President Bill Clinton signed the 'Defence of Marriage Act' which could be used to refuse same-sex marriages. The act came in response to a case that may be brought to the Supreme court challenging the constitutionality of denying same-sex couples the right to marry.

THEY ARE EVERYWHERE

How the Religious Right has become such a powerful force in the political sphere is a question that has been asked many times. Religious Right groups seem organised, aware and pro-active. They own and control many publishing houses, radio and television shows and stations, and hun-

self and cannot be made healthful... and... brings diseases into our community.'

'MODERATES' AT MCGILL

Not everyone who listens to these programmes is as reactionary as the programmes themselves. Many people find these Religious Right groups appealing because of their commitment to Christian values. They are perhaps concerned about issues such as 'family values' but are not as vocal about issues such as homosexuality. Yet this support is what the Religious Right depends on to gain legitimacy and spread its underlying messages throughout society.

Homophobic polemics impact every queer in North America by creating a moralistic tenor that restricts certain modes of existence — namely those which are not heterosexual-Christian.

The rhetoric of the Religious Right which carves out the model of the 'good citizen' has been subsumed into what it means to be a 'good American'. In the US, people have attempted to remove books with homosexual content from libraries and obliterate homosexuality from school curricula — actions that effectively create a restrictive climate that provides no space to be queer.

At McGill, those who could be said to identify with the Religious Right's views are, for the most part, 'moderates'. The McGill Christian Fellowship (MCF) is an interdenominational organisation that concentrates more on faith and prayer than on politics.

However, it is difficult to separate politics from faith. Jeff Jordan, an officer at MCF explained that, 'generally speaking, from what we understand of the bible, we disagree with homosexuality, but that does not mean that we don't accept the people.'

Queer students, he said, would be welcome at all prayer meetings and bible studies, but he did not think that they could hold office.

AN UPHILL BATTLE

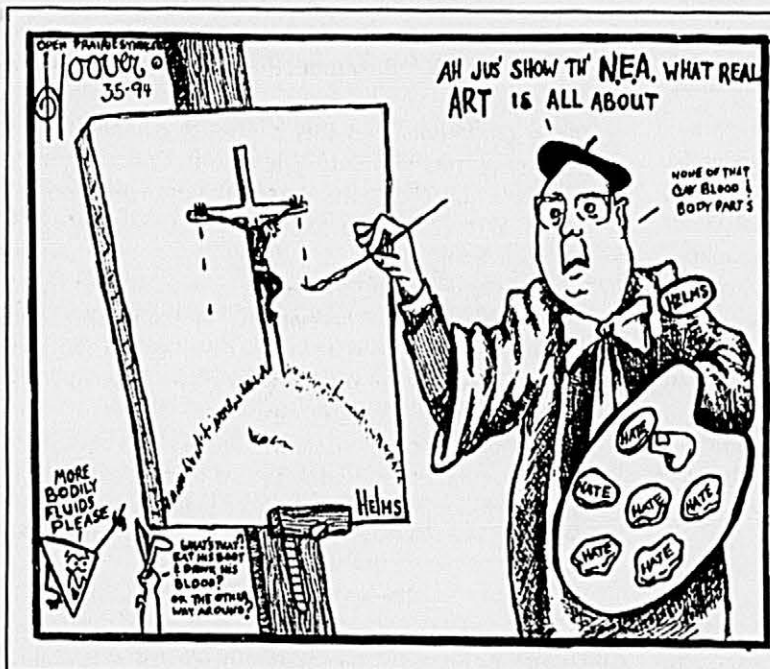
The Religious Right's battle with the queer community has not gone unnoticed by queer activists.

But the battle is by no means an equal one. Using God and Jesus as a rallying point, the Religious Right groups have been able to overlook theological differences to create not only a unified movement but one that is appealing to Chris-

tians — extreme or moderate.

But queers have to fight an uphill battle: To gain equal rights at the same time fighting the Religious Right. Christian is not a dirty word in most American houses, while queer remains a slur.

Also, queers come from so many different backgrounds, have so many issues to address, and so many methods of redressing the problems that exist, that it is extremely difficult task to work as a unified movement.



dreds of Web pages on the Internet.

Media manipulation is the Religious Right's forte. With their own television shows, and a clever use of mainstream media, these groups reach a large audience in North America. Television shows, televangelists, and radio shows such as *Focus on the Family* broadcast in many states and Canadian provinces, and are also sold as transcripts and posted on the Web.

Homosexuality is one of the most often discussed 'problems' in the media produced by the Religious Right. *Stand to Reason*, a radio show that is affiliated with the Religious Right, argues that homosexuals are out to recruit, and that 'there is a serious health risk to the community in homosexuality. It is inherent in the practice of homosexuals it-

11

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

What does a woman want? This question — once posed by Freud — has since been reclaimed by contemporary feminists. Feminists attempt to answer this question by first answering questions about gender and its impact on identity. How different are men and women? How does this difference happen? Does difference mean inequality?

It was questions like these that formed the centre of the clash between mainstream feminists and lesbians in the late '60s and early '70s. While mainstream feminists merely advocated women's entrance into existing social institutions, lesbians believed society was structured along hierarchical lines (a.k.a. 'patriarchy'), that placed women in positions of submission. What they sought was a complete overhaul of the heterosexist system.

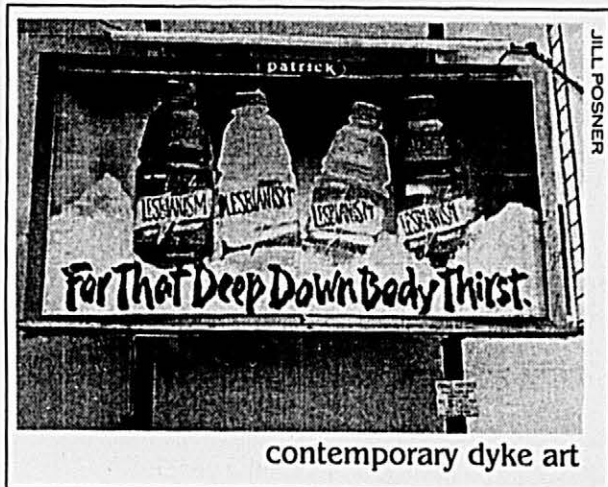
Many lesbians involved in this radical movement believed there was something essential about being a woman, just like there was something essential about being a man. Women and men, therefore, were just too different to coexist.

Lesbian feminist Jill Johnston went so far as to argue, in *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution*, that this difference has an inescapable basis that can only be rectified through separatism.

Today, many feminists would argue Johnston's essentialist position is just as restrict and patriarchy, and that it imprisons a person within an identity predetermined by gender. Contemporary feminism would much prefer to answer the question of woman by first questioning the naturalisation of gender. Rather than an essential characteristic, a person's gender is seen to be an imitation of what society holds up as the ideal.

ARTICULATING NEW QUESTIONS

In light of this almost oppositional divergence between mainstream feminism and lesbians, why undertake an examination of the history of lesbian feminism?



contemporary dyke art

The way in which lesbians responded to the ostracism of mainstream feminists in the late '60s enabled new sets of questions to arise. In their separatist views, early lesbian feminists sought to tear apart the woman/man dyad of heterosexuality that had for so long been taken for granted.

This deconstruction of a deeply ingrained structure was one first step towards a feminism that, today, questions gender specificity by arguing that this specificity is merely perpetuated by an ideal of heterosexuality.

Here, then, is a history of lesbianism's intervention in feminism, and of a pioneering set of questions raised against the dogmas of compulsory heterosexuality.

Johnston's book, published in 1973, addressed the question of women by destabilising gender polarities.

The title, *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution*, may sound militant, even fanatic — the concept of nation having so often been mobilised by groups whose very sustenance is premised on violent exclusion. The title can even be accused of sounding overly simplistic: as if there could be a feminist solution.

However, the title is also a paradoxical response to the kind of fear that lesbians incited for members

BY HELEN POLYCHRONAKOS

Asking our own questions

Lesbians and their impact upon feminism

of mainstream feminism. In *Lesbian Nation*, Johnston relates an incident that illustrates this tension. In 1970, she swam shirtless in a pool during an expensive benefit. Some explained her behavior as a protest against lesbian discrimination within feminism. Betty Friedan, who founded the rather conservative National Organisation for Women (NOW) in 1966, inadvertently confirmed the accusation embedded in the statement. She walked to the microphone and declared Johnston the biggest enemy of the movement.

because of its hierarchical set-up, initiated a gutsy move away from heterosexuality. Her new organisation, The Feminists, had a quota that allowed for only one third of its members to be married women. For all of these feminists, consciousness raising meant a profound awareness of one's gender and sexuality, an awareness that was necessary to complete emancipation.

Many radical feminists venerated lesbians as the vanguard of their movement, because they refused to cohabit with the enemy. Some called themselves political lesbians. Still, many members of these organisations expressed homophobic

Contemporary feminism would much prefer to answer the question of woman by first questioning the naturalisation of gender. Rather than an essential characteristic, a person's gender is seen to be an imitation of what society holds up as the ideal.

LESBOPHOBIA SPURS NEW SPLITS

Johnston's subversive act was indicative of the ways in which lesbians clashed with more conservative feminists. In NOW's Statement of Purpose, the organisation's reluctance to pursue the kinds of subversive questions undertaken by lesbians is quite evident. The statement suggests that through feminism, women will develop the confidence in their ability to determine actively, in partnership with men, the conditions of their life, their choices, their future, and their society.

NOW answered the questions surrounding woman by declaring a need for equality in their relationships (both personal and socioeconomic) with men. They sought equal representation and recognition within the heterosexual status quo.

Lesbians, of course, felt excluded by NOW's stance, as well as the homophobic feelings expressed by some of the group's organisers, who believed that making an issue out of lesbianism would only detract from the fight against sexism.

When NOW organisers expressed fears of a lesbian takeover in 1970, this hostility became apparent.

But lesbians were not the only ones who expressed dissatisfaction with NOW. Many women felt that more radical action was needed, and founded feminist groups that advocated separatist politics.

The years between 1967 and 1968 saw the formation, for example, of Radical Women in New York. Female members of the New Left, who felt excluded by the socialist organisation's misogyny, formed the Women's Liberation Movement.

This split within a political movement seemed to be proof that some women could not merely enter a man's world without questioning its structure. It spoke to the fact that groups like the New Left did not, despite their humanitarian claims, extend their privileges universally.

Thus, more radical feminists became dissatisfied with NOW's assumption that women only needed equality. They asked, instead, for women to become aware of their specificity as women within a society that oppressed them. This oppression, they argued, found its roots in women's sexual relationships with men.

Heterosexual sex represented in very concrete terms the many ways in which women were oppressed by men: it perpetuated ideals of the family, confining women within the home and making it difficult for them to participate in social and economic institutions. And, always lurking in the realm of possibility, were rape as well as other forms of abuse, creating for women a sense of powerlessness. On this point, feminists were influenced by Marxist ideology, and referred to heterosexual culture as a class (some even said caste) system.

TOWARDS EMANCIPATION

Ti-Grace Atkinson, a radical who resigned from NOW

feelings. Though they could find refuge from homophobia within the Gay Liberation Movement, women encountered misogyny from its mostly male members.

Not knowing where to turn, lesbians began to form their own groups, one of which was Radicalesbians. Its members wrote *The Woman-Identified Woman*, which addressed questions about women by positing an urgent and imperative need to break free from a heterosexual hierarchy.

Defying NOW's insistence that women could work within the binary that supported patriarchy, the members of Radicalesbians incited women to define themselves independently of their sexual relationships with men. Our energies must flow towards our sisters, not the oppressor, they claimed.

At a 1970 coalition of women's groups, lesbians wore T-shirts that identified them as The Lavender Menace, an apt epithet that illustrated the radical restructuring lesbians sought. This restructuring was a menace to an entire social and ideological structure. Their insistence that women finally free themselves from their restrictive position within a binary went a step beyond NOW's meek pleas for the equality of women within that binary. Lesbians were a threat not only because of their political demands, but because of the very ways in which they lived their lives.

They demonstrated that it was possible to exist without the heterosexual ideal, and therefore shook the very foundations on which their society was founded.

Having demystified the ideal of heterosexist power structures, lesbian feminism

paved the way for contemporary thinkers. Today's feminism argues that the ideals of gender are invented by discourse, and that the bodies that attempt to conform to them give these ideals a concrete reality, one which reinforces the validity of an otherwise invisible and powerless ideology.

Lesbian feminists, then, leave behind a legacy of dissenting voices that can still be heard in contemporary feminism's attempt to question the power structures that systematically define and oppress the class called 'women'.



Artwork from the '70s by radical feminist dykes

12

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

What is 'normal'?

Intersexuals challenge the medical community

BY MARK NARRON

While the topic of "hermaphrodites" is commonly confined to the realm of Greek mythology, or debased into a freak-show exhibit at the check-out counter, the cultural and medical issues surrounding hermaphroditism are almost never addressed.

There are between three and 10 million individuals in North America who are of ambiguous sex at birth. One to four per cent of all children born today can be classified as "intersexual," the medical term for individuals whose chromosomal makeup or sexual characteris-

tics fall between the range of 100 per cent male or female.

However, the tragic truth about children born intersexual is that the vast majority are surgically assigned a sex as newborns. Though generally medically unnecessary, the practice of sex assignment to intersexed children has been institutionalised in the medical community since the 1950s.

"If their parents see their child as a freak, the prognosis is poor. Some parents would not accept a child whose genital appearance was not normalised," Dr. David Sandberg, a psychologist at the Children's Hospital of Buffalo, New York, was quoted as saying.

Justified as necessary to protect the "emotional health" of the child, this "normalising" surgery often entails painful side effects in adulthood, and a loss of sexual feeling.

However, intersexual adults are increasingly challenging the medical community's mutilation of their bodies and the rationale that "abnormal" sexuality is an illness. The San Francisco-based Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) is one of the foremost peer support and activist intersexual groups on the continent. Committed to education and counseling, ISNA vocally lobbies the medical community to give intersexual children the choice to opt for cosmetic genital surgery only after being properly informed of the possible side-effects.

ISNA members are quick to point out that even though surgery is rationalised for the psychological benefit of the intersexed child, in most cases, counseling for the child and the child's parents is inadequate or non-existent.

"The argument is always that the surgery makes the

parents more comfortable," states Dr. Anne Fausto-Sterling, a Biologist at Brown University who has worked with ISNA. "But counselling can do that too, and it is not irreversible in quite the same way as surgery. The question is, do we use surgery to make parents more comfortable in the short run — in the often mistaken belief that this will improve the psychological outcome for the intersexed child — even though it may mean severe impairment of sexual function in adulthood?"

Groups like ISNA are articulating the message that what society defines as "normal" is often an issue divorced from medical fact. For example, in her book, *Myths Of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men*, Dr. Fausto-Sterling suggests that the continuum between what is classically considered "male" and "female" warrants the delineation of at least five sexes.

All humans have the capacity to develop secondary sexual characteristics in the womb. Although a main cause of intersexuality is the possession of an atypical number of chromosomes, conditions such as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome do not carry serious health risks.

Certain intersexual conditions, such as micropenis, hypospadias or an erect clitoris, can be purely cosmetic variances within the norm, having no effects on an individual's fertility, puberty or ability to experience sexual pleasure. Plastic surgery on the genitals, however, can be profoundly damaging to erotic function due to scarring, susceptibility to infection and trauma.

Attacked on all fronts

Biphobia still pervasive in queer and straight communities

BY ALLISON ENGEL

Biphobia, the irrational fear and hatred of bisexual people, is a phenomenon that is alive and well both in the queer and heterosexual communities today.

There are a number of myths and fears that characterise this prejudice, and they permeate different groups in different ways, leading to the exclusion of bisexuals from social and political structures.

In the book *Bisexual Politics*, edited by Naomi Tucker, many of the contributors discuss experiences surrounding biphobia.

Amanda Udis-Kessler, a writer and anti-homophobic educator, recounts a memory of an experience at the Oberlin College queer students' group. She writes, "I wondered why we were arguing over changing the name and the charter of the LGU to include bisexuals...I was surprised and disheartened by the anger, fear, and resentment I heard on the part of some lesbians and gay men. The change finally did go through, leaving bitter feelings in its wake."

In another essay, Elizabeth Armstrong, quotes a lesbian peer who claims that "lesbians sleeping with men and calling themselves 'bi-dykes' oppress lesbians as surely as straight male pornography."

She continues, saying that with their "heterosexual privilege and statistical distortions", bis try to redefine 'lesbian' in their own image.

"Bis are getting a lot of support for this — from straights who always believed that lesbians fuck men and from gay men who are more comfortable with women who fuck men," concludes the woman.

NO CLEAR-CUT DEFINITION

The experiences expressed in *Bisexual Politics*, are witnessed by bisexuals everyday.

Nicola Kuchta, co-coordinator of the Lesbians, Bisexuals Gays and Transgenders McGill (LBGTGM) bisexual discussion group comments that "people just coming out as bi are often trying to figure out exactly what being bisexual means. They can't do it because there is no clear-cut definition."

People feel alienated when they are constantly told that they must really just be monosexual — gay or straight. "It is always a problem when someone else tries to define you," Kuchta states.

For Erik Stevens, a bisexual activist at the University of Toronto, a significant problem with understanding bisexuality, is heterosexual society's common belief that sexuality is a static, binary characteristic. "You are either homosexual or heterosexual — there is no room for bisexuality in this model," says Stevens.

Because of this misunderstanding, it is easy for a heterosexist culture to misrepresent and falsely generalise a group that is generally invisible and does not fit the so-

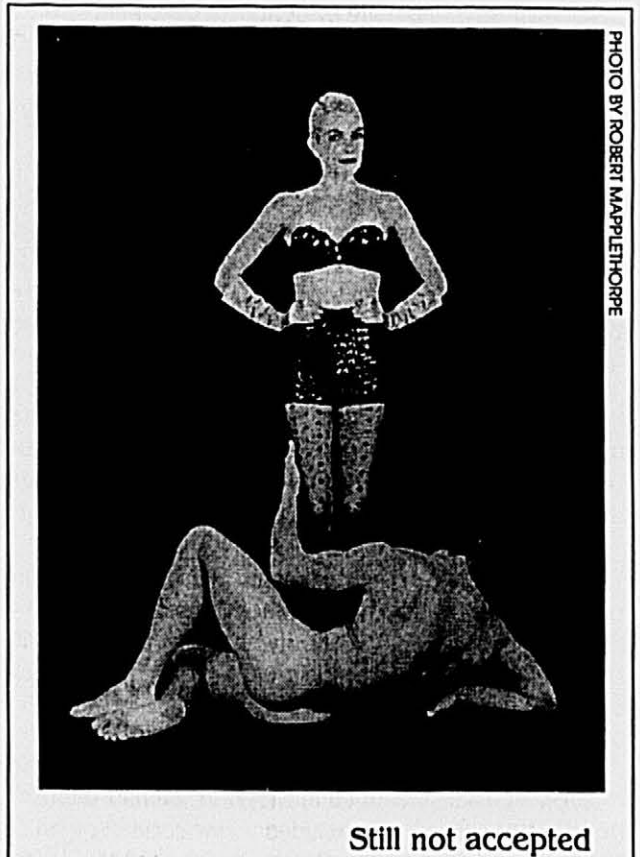


PHOTO BY ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

Still not accepted

cially constructed, acceptable model for monosexuality.

People often draw the conclusion that a bisexual must simply be someone who is obsessed with sex, as is implied by the common insult, "they sleep with anything that moves."

The blockbuster film, *Basic Instinct*, perpetuates many of these biphobic myths with Sharon Stone playing a promiscuous, deceptive bisexual, who "does not know what she wants".

Kuchta recalls her own experiences of misrepresentation due to her strong personality and "butch-like" appearance. She states, "because of these characteristics, many believe that I must be a lesbian. The straight community has adopted the queer community's ideas about what a bisexual's personality and appearance should be like — and a butch just can't be bi."

FINDING A COMMUNITY

The queer community, which is supposed to be "inclusive", is often biphobic for different reasons. One popular myth is that bisexuals are really just homosexuals who are not ready to admit it to themselves yet.

At a meeting for LBGT (lesbian, gay, bisexual youth Toronto) in mid-August 1996, the group debated the role of bisexuality in the gay and lesbian community.

One gay student at the meeting stated that bisexuals can come to the group if they want to, but because they are different they do not really belong there. A second gay student suggested that "straight bisexuals" are diminishing the struggle for recognition of "real bisexuals".

Although Stevens agrees that in some cases bisexuality being a transitional sexuality is true, it is not true for all, or even for most bisexual individuals.

But it is easy for homosexuals to resent bisexuals for being able to take advantage of heterosexual privilege — bisexuals can get married, hold hands in public, and can just be generally socially accepted, — that is, Stevens reminds us, as long as they have a partner of the opposite sex.

In addition, bisexual women are also perceived as a threat to lesbian feminism, as men become a part of the once exclusive community of women.

On the one hand, gays and lesbians try to exclude bisexuals from the queer community, hiding behind the idea that bisexuals simply are not queer enough. At the same time bisexuals are not straight enough for the heterosexual community.

Kuchta comments that when bisexuals respond to this discrimination and insist on being recognised, they often come across as "the militant of the militant."

But this identity is often accepted as the worst of two evils "It is a choice, between this label, or simply not being recognised," says Kuchta.

For David D'Andrea, former coordinator of LBGTGM's bisexual discussion group, "There is no where to go and be bi."

In light of this clear presence of biphobia, however, Darrell Tan, political co-coordinator of LBGTGM comments, that "It is preposterous for us as queer people, whose experiences have been coloured by society's rejection and disbelief in our realities, to disbelieve, challenge and invalidate another person's experience that may be different from our own."

13

QUEER
SPECIAL ISSUE

MCGILL DAILY
NOVEMBER 11, 1996

Taking a queer poll

What's in store for us in the next election?

BY DAVID D'ANDREA

While polls say the Liberals are likely to cruise to another big victory in the upcoming election, their record on queer issues leaves many angry and disappointed. When voting time comes, predicted to be in late spring or early fall of next year, activists will have to work hard to hold the government responsible.

Queer rights have not had a high profile on Parliament Hill over the last four years. The Liberals would clearly prefer for the issue to just go away. Bill C-33, which amended the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, finally passed earlier this year. This legislation, originally introduced by the Tories over 10 years ago, was in danger of being once again abandoned by the current government. When the Liberals finally introduced the legislation in response to pressure from queer activism, they permitted government MPs to vote against the bill without threat of retribution.

This piece of legislation, and others like it (such as the benign hate-crimes bill) have run into serious opposition within the party. MPs Tom Wappel and Roseanne Skoke have displayed extreme homophobia in public, but their actions did not result in expulsion from caucus. Possibly more serious is the large number of Liberal MPs who discreetly lobby against pro-queer measures behind closed doors. Although Liberal party policy is quite progressive on queer rights, pro-queer government ministers (including Allan Rock and Hedy Fry) have largely been stymied in their efforts to enforce policy.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien has not given the queer community any reason to believe he's on its side. During the run-up to Bill C-33, he publicly toyed with the idea of letting the legislation die. He became the first head of state to refuse to attend the World AIDS Conference, fearing attacks over his government's decision to slash AIDS funding. And recently, responding to a question about same-sex marriage from high school students, he stated, "I'm not personally very comfortable with that because I don't know how that works in a society. [Marriage] is a contract between two individuals according to the Canadian tradition of different sex to share a family life together."

The Liberals' position on queer rights

is consistent with their overall strategy: move as far to the right as possible while still posing as progressives. This has been possible because of the extremism of the opposition Reform party, who make Brian Mulroney look like a bleeding-heart liberal. In addition, the NDP's loss of official party status means that there is no protest from the left in Parliament.

There are several queer rights issues on the horizon. Recognition of same-sex partnerships, including same-sex spousal benefits, is the most prominent. Continued support for AIDS funding is another. The upcoming federal election will largely decide the fate of these issues. Without a reinvigorated opposition on the left, though, it is clear that the Liberals will do nothing to advance them.

So how do the other parties fare on queer issues?

Reform Party

Not surprisingly, the Reform Party has taken hard-line positions. Reform MPs voted overwhelmingly against Bill C-33. They also voted against the hate-crimes legislation, which merely dictated that in sentencing people for queer-bashing or other hate crimes, judges could take into account that hatred. Bob Ringma showed the ugly face of Reform policy when he stated that employers should be free to fire queers or blacks if customers objected to them (or "at least move them to the back of the shop").

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois has actually been quite pro-queer. It is unfortunate, however, that the party's focus on constitutional questions has meant that it has not pursued the government over the issue. Like the Liberals, the Bloc has its share of internal division over queer rights. Unlike the Liberals, though, the leadership of the Bloc has made it clear that members cannot flaunt party policy without facing consequences. Bloquiste Réal Ménard recently came out as the second openly gay MP and has been active on queer issues.

Progressive Conservatives

The Tories, like the Liberals do not like to talk about queer rights. Their record in government has shown that they are no friends of the queer community.

New Democratic Party

The NDP has been the only party to show leadership on queer rights. Home of openly gay MP Svend Robinson, the NDP has consistently supported pro-queer legislation. Robinson has also repeatedly introduced queer-rights private members' bills in an effort to embarrass the government into acting.

an opportunity to reveal their homophobia. The meeting, held in the Austrian city of Dornbirn, was the sixth annual convention of the Austrian Lesbian & Gay Forum. The conference was organised to discuss a vote to be held in the Austrian parliament on November 27 to repeal the sodomy laws.

The mayor of Dornbirn refused to rent public space to the conference, stating that the group was destroying the basic family values of society. The conference organisers found space in a local hotel which was very supportive.

After learning of the planned conference, a state leader of the Roman Catholic Church wrote a diatribe against homosexuality and warned his colleagues to avoid contact with the conference. That sparked a protest from local gay-friendly priests that is expected to carry the controversy into a meeting of Austria's Catholic bishops this week.

While those reactions and the remarks of some leading politicians who appeared at the Forum dominated media coverage, the sodomy repeal vote scheduled for November 27 has gone all but unnoticed. Activists

Events

Today, November 11

- Meeting to plan December 6 ceremony in memory of the women killed at École Polytechnique. 17h00, Shatner 425. All welcome
- Volunteer potluck at McGill Women's Union, 18h30, Shatner 423.
- Prof. Kowalk of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, will speak on *Problems of Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe*. Noon, Concordia University School of Community and Public Affairs, Basement Lounge, 2149 Mackay.

Tuesday, November 12

- Colloquium on multinationals and human rights, with Diana Wiwa and others. 19h30, Frank Dawson Adams Auditorium, 3450 University.

Wednesday, November 13

- Interested in volunteering in the future? McGill Students International Development Initiative presents an opportunity to speak with organisations doing development work overseas. Shatner Ballroom, 10h - 16h.
- Judy Rebeck and Kiké Roach. *Politically Speaking: A Dialogue across Race And Generations*, 15h30, Leacock 232. Info 499-8958.

Thursday, November 14

- Storycircle at The Yellow Door, 3625 Aylmer. \$3. Info: 398-6243, 849-2657.
- Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics presents *Livestock Management and Land Disputes in Northern Mali: The Experience of Veterinaires sans frontières*. 12h30 - 13h30, Thompson House, 4th floor, 3650 McTavish.

Friday, November 15

- Caribbean Students' Society of McGill presents another Big Party. Basement of Student Union Bldg, 3480 McTavish.
- Ohio State University's Prof. Saul Cornell speaks on *A Permanent Right of Revolution? The Militia Movement and U.S. Constitutionalism*, 15h30, Thomson House, 3650 McTavish. All welcome.

Saturday, November 16

- Lectures Publiques presented by Théâtre de la grenouille. readings and open-mike. 14h30 - 21h00 at Café Sarajevo, 2080 Clark. Info: 985-5927.
- Meditation. Try It - It Works, with Devaki Groulx. 12h00 - 14h00, Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater. Info: 845-1837, 489-5692.

Monday, November 18

- *The Fifth Commandment: Jewish sources and family decision-making for incompetent patients* at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Shalom, 4100 Sherbrooke West. Info: 937-3575.

Beyond

- McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women and WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) present the National Film Board of Canada's *Asking Different Questions: Women and Science*. Panel discussion with film-makers will follow. Thursday, November 21, 19h30. Frank Dawson Adams Auditorium, 811 Sherbrooke West.
- Congregation Beth Ora, 5th annual bazaar. 2600 Badaux, St. Laurent. Free admission. Info: 748-6559.

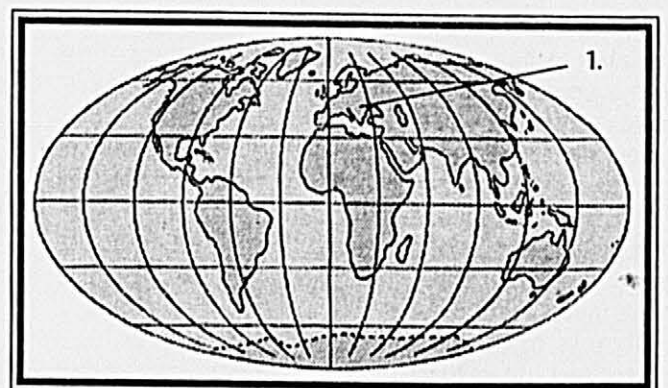


1. Conference not welcomed in Dornbirn

A meeting of almost 200 Austrian lesbians, gays and transgender people last week gave politicians and the Roman Catholic Church

had been worried that public support for the repeal vote would be damaged by all the publicity surrounding the conference. The repeal has the support of three parties, the Greens, the Liberals and the Socialists, but at least three more votes will be needed for passage.

Source: Planet Out News <<http://www.planetout.com/newsplanet/>>



daily classifieds

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): \$4.60 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$4.05 per day. General Public: \$5.75 per day, or \$4.90 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, prices include applicable GST (7%) or PST (6.5%). Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

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